

WASHINGTON, Sunday, March 18, 2001 - The House will vote this week on legislation introduced by U.S. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) to help communities build tornado-safe shelters.

The legislation allows local governments to use Community Development Block Grant funds to construct storm shelters in mobile home communities.

"Today, the technology is there to give early and normally ample warning to our citizens when a powerful tornado approaches. What is missing for many of our citizens is a safe shelter from that storm," said Bachus. "When a tornado strikes, all of us are at risk. Unless you have a basement or an interior safe room in your home, you need a storm shelter. This legislation will allow cities and counties to use the Community Development Block Grant funds they receive to build storm shelters to protect their citizens."

There are existing federal programs that help communities and individuals build storm shelters or safe rooms for site-built homes, apartment buildings and schools. However, the programs do not include mobile home communities.

"As we have sadly seen, tornadoes do not make such distinctions. I want all our citizens to be able to benefit from this program. We need to level the playing field so manufactured housing communities qualify, just as others already do. Mobile home communities and residents shouldn't be excluded," said Bachus.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is one of the largest sources of federal assistance to local governments. Last year, Alabama received almost \$60 million in CDBG funds.

Bachus introduced the bill on January 30.